Samson Summary
The Samson Syndrome

Chapter 1 – Strong Men Tend To Disregard Boundaries

Samson only respected God’s boundaries when it suited him – the rest of the time he did what he wanted.

- **BOUNDARIES: FROM DAY ONE YOU WILL HAVE THEM**
- **TWO BAD THINGS WILL HAPPEN IF YOU CONTINUE TO IGNORE GOD’S BOUNDARIES**
  - You Will Be Shackled
    - If you’ve been willfully climbing over God’s boundaries to indulge in sin, you must stop or find one day that you’ve been shackled (trapped)
  - You Will Be Shamed
    - God has a way of bringing the secret sins of strong men out into the open
- **YOU CAN BE SPARED**
  - Remember the joy of living within God’s boundaries
  - Renounce any activity that has lured you outside God’s boundaries in the past
  - Rebuild the fences you’ve trampled
  - Rejoice in the mercy and grace of a forgiving God

Chapter 2 – Strong Men Tend To Struggle with Lust

Was I lusting? Am I an adulterer? Do I need to repent? Is there something wrong with me?

- **LUST CAUSES A PERSON TO IGNORE SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS**
  - Humans are the only creatures on earth that are anatomically designed for face-to-face mating
  - The human female is the only female that can have an orgasm.
  - Humans are the only creatures on earth that are capable of understanding and enjoying romance
- **LUST CAUSES A PERSON TO IGNORE GOD’S PLAN**
- **BRING SEXUAL DESIRES UNDER CONTROL**
  - Get right – guard your heart
  - Get away – cut yourself off from temptations
  - Get help – counselors or organizations
  - Get busy – fill your spare time with fruitful or productive pursuits
- The goal: All My Guilt Is Gone

Chapter 3 – Strong Men Tend To Ignore Good Advice

Good advice is like medicine – it’s no good unless you take it.

- **THE GREATEST MEN COVET GOOD ADVICE**
- **THE GREATEST MEN CHOOSE GOOD ADVISORS**
You should be listening to people who disagree with you
You should be listening to people who love you
You should be listening to people who have achieved the success you’re longing for
You should be listening to people who demonstrate wisdom
You should be listening to people who know and love God’s Word

- Reserve judgment
- Resist the temptation to bust in – let the speaker finish
- Remain calm in the face of agitation
- Review for purposes of clarification
- Reflect on the advice itself
- Receive or Reject – but avoid a hasty decision

Chapter 4 – Strong Men Tend To Break the Rules

If a man breaks a rule and no one is there to see it, did it happen?

- RULES SHELTER US FROM TROUBLE
- RULES SHAPE US INTO BETTER PEOPLE
- RULES SHOW US HOW WE’RE DOING
- EVALUATE THE RULE
  - Who wrote the rule – God or man?
  - Does the rule ask you to do anything that would violate God’s will or your conscience?
  - Does the rule have a meaningful purpose?
  - What would happen if you disobeyed the rule?
  - What would happen if everybody disobeyed the rule?
- Most rules are good and should be obeyed

Chapter 5 – Strong Men Tend To Overestimate Their Own Cleverness

Discernment is the ability to see through to the heart of a matter.

- THE ENEMIES OF DISCERNMENT
  - The first deadly enemy of discernment is Pride
  - The second deadly enemy of discernment is Liquor
  - The third deadly enemy of discernment is Anger
  - The fourth deadly enemy of discernment is Lust
  - The fifth deadly enemy of discernment is Greed
  - The sixth deadly enemy of discernment is Hatred
  - The seventh deadly enemy of discernment is Impatience
- THE SECRETS OF DISCERNMENT
  - Look around and see your blessings
  - Look within and see your integrity
  - Look forward and see your future
  - Look up and see your God
Chapter 6 – Strong Men Tend To Use Anger as a Tool

Strong men employ angry outbursts as a matter of routine in both their personal and professional lives.

- **Five Tough Questions To Ask Yourself**
  - How often do you blow your top?
  - Do you ever use anger to try to control people?
  - Does it give you satisfaction to know that there are people who are afraid of you?
  - Are your immediate family members afraid of you?
  - Do your angry outbursts ever turn physical?

- **Analyze Your Anger**
  - Anger is addictive – soon anger becomes your identity
  - Anger must be intensified to maintain its effectiveness
  - Anger produces collateral damage
  - Anger stunts your spiritual growth

- Anger will keep you from ever becoming a strong Christian

- **Attack Your Anger**
  - Let God’s Word become your counselor
  - Lower your expectations of people
  - Learn the difference between a mountain and a molehill
  - Work at developing patience
  - Resist the temptation to speculate
  - Loosen your grip on money

- Don’t misuse your anger

Chapter 7 – Strong Men Tend To Repeat the Same Mistakes

How many times does a guy have to screw up before he learns his lesson?

- **The Reasons – What’s At The Heart Of The Problem**
  - Even the strongest of men are still human
  - Many strong men have blind spots (unrecognized weaknesses)
  - Many strong men have untended spiritual weaknesses
  - Many strong men have too much pride

- **The Remedy – How To Stop Making Mistakes**
  - Hook Up with a friend who will hold you accountable
  - Give Up your rationalizations (lame excuses)
  - Line Up your life with God’s Word
  - Power Up with the Holy Spirit – empty yourself of pride and surrender to the Lord

Chapter 8 – Strong Men Tend To Have Big Egos

Pride has been the motivation for some of the greatest atrocities in history.

- **Your Perch On The Pedestal Of Pride**
o On the pedestal of pride there is an **absence of heartfelt worship**
o On the pedestal of pride there is **foolishness** – pride goes before destruction
o On the pedestal of pride there is **isolation** – no close friends
o On the pedestal of pride there is **disappointment** – pride is always temporary

- **YOUR HOPE FOR A HEART OF HUMILITY**
  - Remember what you are – merely human beings
  - Remember why you’re here – to worship and serve your Creator
  - Remember who you serve – yourself or God (alternative to a self-serving lifestyle)

Chapter 9 – Strong Men Tend To Take Foolish Risks

>You simply can’t play with fire without getting burned.<br/>

- **FOUR KINDS OF RISKS**
  - Unavoidable risks – it doesn’t matter how careful you are, accidents happen
  - Necessary risks – sometimes life leaves us with only one viable option
  - Calculated risks – the carefully calculated risk often brings the biggest rewards
  - Foolish risks – will only bring us trouble and despair

- **SIX QUESTIONS THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE**
  - Are the rewards worth as much as the consequences might cost me?
  - Have I fully researched the risk?
  - What has happened to other people who have taken the same risk?
  - What is my motivation for taking this risk?
  - What will my life be like if I don’t take this risk?
  - What does the Bible say about what I am thinking about doing?

Chapter 10 – Strong Men Tend To Struggle with Intimacy

>There are too many walls and secrets in our marriages. We’re sharing beds, but not feelings.<br/>

- **STRONG-MAN FACTORS THAT AFFECT INTIMACY**
  - Busyness – strong men are always busy
  - Ambition – many strong men have goals that extend far beyond their families
  - Impatience – strong men are used to getting what they want whenever they want it
  - Distraction – strong men naturally have a lot on their minds
  - Money – strong, successful men mistakenly believe that material things can make up for a lack of time and attention
  - Attraction to and by the opposite sex – strong men always attract women and can easily be attracted to them
  - Fatigue – strong men often have nothing left to give their wives when they get home

- **Regarding your wife - how long has it been since you:** had a heart-to-heart talk; asked her if anything was bothering her; spent an entire day alone with her; cried together; shared a secret with her; wrote her a love letter; gave her a backrub; surprised her with a weekend getaway; sat together in a room without turning on the TV; lost track of time because of a long conversation
with her; spent more than fifteen minutes in lovemaking; made love without rolling over afterward and falling asleep?

- **THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE**
  - **It takes two** to build intimacy – both must be involved
  - **It takes time** to build intimacy – it’s a learning process
  - **It takes trouble** to build intimacy – hard times build strength and character

- **THE RIGHT PLAN**
  - Make it a point to spend quality time with your wife
  - Give your wife the gift of words
  - Protect the dignity and privacy of your marriage
  - Make your wife your primary source of emotional support

- Your wife is uniquely qualified to be your primary source of emotional support

**Chapter 11 – Strong Men Tend To Take Too Much For Granted**

*Mark it down – bad things happen to men who take too much for granted.*

- **YOU MAY BE TAKING THINGS FOR GRANTED**
  - **Your wife**
  - **Your kids**
  - **Your job**
  - **Your health**
  - **Your wealth**
  - **Your God**

- Satan is looking for someone cruising through life on autopilot

- **CHECK YOURSELF**
  - Are you given to period of whining or complaining?
  - Is disobedience putting any of your blessings at risk?
  - Does the grass always look greener on the other side of the fence?
  - Do you practice good health habits?

- **CHANGE YOURSELF**
  - Take a closer look at the people around you
  - Take life a little slower
  - Dare to associate with people whose lives are different from yours

- Strong men can indeed be humble and grateful

**Chapter 12 – Strong Men Tend To Lose Sight of the Big Picture**

*All men should try to learn before they die, what they are running from, and to, and why.*

- **THE TIES THAT BLIND – THINGS THAT DISTRACT FOCUS FROM THE BIG PICTURE**
  - **Pleasure** – Satan will identify your greatest source of pleasure - good or bad - and try his best to get you too wrapped up in it
  - **Pain** – is pain creating a chink in your spiritual armor?
  - **Prosperity** – the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil
- **Power** – the taste of power can change everything bringing arrogance and hatred

**GETTING BACK ON TRACK**
- Write a personal mission statement to bring daily guidance
- Choose friends that understand and support your life goals
- Learn to tell the difference between the urgent and the important
- Work hard to develop and maintain an eternal perspective

*This world isn’t all there is; there is no greater tragedy than for a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul.*